



## Fact Sheet: H1N1 Flu Testing and Treatment

### Q. I have the flu. Why won't my doctor test me for H1N1?

A. Your health care provider will know if you need to be tested for H1N1, based on current guidance from the US CDC. In many cases, your doctor will not need to test you for H1N1 flu. There are several reasons:

- We are monitoring the progress of H1N1 in the state through a number of different data sources, rather than counting individual lab reports. Now that we know that there have been cases of H1N1 in every county in Maine, we no longer need to test every case.
- Testing everyone with flu-like symptoms would overwhelm our laboratories, so we need to save those resources for those who are most severely ill, where a confirmed diagnosis might influence treatment.
- Testing will usually not change either treatment or the steps you should take if you are sick. The treatments for both seasonal and H1N1 flu are the same.
- If you are not in a group of people at high risk for complications and do not have severe symptoms, you may recover on your own without even needing to see your health care provider.

### Q. Someone in my house is sick. What should I do?

A. The groups at risk for complications from the flu are slightly different from the groups prioritized to receive H1N1 vaccine. Those at highest risk for complications from the flu include:

- Children younger than 2 years-old
- Pregnant women
- Adults age 65 and older
- People with underlying medical conditions (such as asthma, heart failure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, HIV)

If you fall into one or more of these groups and you have signs of the flu, contact your health care provider as soon as possible to get a prescription for antiviral medications (such as Tamiflu®). If you fall into one of more of these groups, you have not gotten an H1N1 vaccination yet, and you live with someone who has the flu, contact your health care provider. In some cases, your doctor may want to prescribe antiviral medications before you show symptoms. The state's stockpile of these medicines is available to those who do not have adequate insurance and cannot afford the costs.

Although **most people can stay home to recover without seeing a health care provider**, it is possible for healthy people to develop severe illness from the flu. Anyone with the flu should seek medical attention for:

- Dehydration
- Trouble breathing
- Getting better, then suddenly getting a lot worse
- Any major change in condition

### More information:

Visit [www.maine flu.gov](http://www.maine flu.gov), [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov), or [www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu)

Call us Monday-Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 1-888-257-0990; Deaf/Hard of Hearing: 1-800-606-0215

Email your questions to: [flu.questions@maine.gov](mailto:flu.questions@maine.gov)